

FAYETTEVILLE HOUSING AUTHORITY

Special Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 2, 2021, 5:35 pm

Via Zoom

I. Call to Order

Chair Bensinger called to order the special meeting of the Fayetteville Housing Authority Board of Commissioners at 5:35 pm on Tuesday, February 2, 2021 via Zoom.

II. Roll Call

Commissioner conducted a roll call. In attendance were: Commissioner Bensinger, Commissioner McMahon, Commissioner Jones. Additionally, in attendance: Executive Director Belford, Justice of the Peace Stafford, various members of the press and public.

Absent: Commissioner Breashears

III. Old Business

A. Program recommendations - Emergency Rental Assistance

Executive Director Belford reviewed the official grant agreement from Washington County, which stated the primary amount, when to apply for more funding. County Attorney Lester is the primary point of contact for other organizations to apply. There is a possibility that a second round of grant funding could be impacted if other organizations applied.

Commissioner McMahon asked about new staff allocations. Commissioner Jones recommended making sure all positions are posted to the community for transparency.

Commissioner Terry asked for clarification regarding county level regarding administrative decisions of fund distribution. She asked about making the applications accessible to the public. Commissioner Jones discussed reaching out to communities who do not speak English as a first language.

Commissioner Jones asked about collaboration with Accelerate and 211.

Commissioner Jones asked for clarification regarding sub-granting, the prior meeting with the community partners, as well as coverage area and outreach. Landlords and other individuals can help fill out applications with the appropriate paperwork.

Executive Director Belford discussed the need for transparency and flexibility, and reviewed feedback from an earlier meeting this day with nonprofit community partners. A discussion was initiated regarding the prioritization and scoring process for the lottery, which is currently based on research from other national programs and community partner feedback. Commissioner Terry recommended using HUD language for talking about ranking and homeless preferences as a framework.

Commissioner McMahon wanted to know if there was currently allocated assistance for people experiencing homelessness. Director Belford discussed the specificity of short-term recent homelessness due to COVID-19.

Commissioner McMahon asked about population data for people who need assistance. Director Belford invited Justice of the Peace Stafford to go over population and rental need data for Washington County. Director Belford later commented that the 'Notify Me' submissions were over 250 after being online eight days.

On behalf of the absent Commissioner Breashears, Commissioner Jones initiated a discussion on marketing. There were recommendations for partnering with utilities to provide flyers with utility bills, using Every Door Direct through the post office, or a blended approach as discussed by Commissioner Terry.

IV. Public Comment

- A. The Democratic Women of Washington County:** Requested a reminder to the process of applying for the grant money. Director Belford answered that there is no process for that application right now. She also wanted to know if the February 15 deadline was based on how quickly the money is expected to go. Director Belford answered affirmatively.
- B. Emma Claybrook with 4029 News:** Asked for clarification regarding the amount of money received for the grant and what they thought the most important thing for the public to know to make the process smoother. Commissioner Bensinger directed the question to Director Belford who spoke about the limits of the amount of money currently in the grant, as well as the process and defining terms such as AMI.
- C. Jesse with KNWA:** Wanted to know where the rest of the \$7 million went and what the current sub-grant covers. Director Belford discussed how it gives other organizations the opportunity to apply for the grant and confirmed that it covers all of Washington County other than Springdale since they have their own Housing Authority. She covered brief details about their emergency rental program but directed them to Mary Jane at the Springdale Housing Authority. Current plan is to have the FHA applications open by Thursday using existing software, but that date is flexible.

Jesse later asked which types of organizations could apply. Director Belford is not sure as to details of who can apply but has encouraged organizations that currently serve marginalized communities with rental assistance to apply.

V. New Business

A. Resolution #1257 – Authorization to issue Letter of Intent to pursue purchasing Grandview Apartments.

Tabled since Commissioner Breashears was absent.

Commissioner Terry recommended possibly drafting a letter of intent that is not binding until the board vote but allows for exchanging with the realtor.

VI. Adjournment

Commissioner Bensinger adjourned the meeting at 7:05 pm.